

***With 107,000 U.S. Veterans On the Streets Any Given Night, Legislation Would Create Tax Form Check-Off for Donations to Homeless Veterans Fund***

Washington, D.C. – Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Representative Steve Israel (D-NY) yesterday joined with colleagues to introduce legislation to help end homelessness among our nation's veterans. The Check the Box for Homeless Veterans Act of 2011 offers taxpayers the opportunity to help keep these brave men and women off the streets by making a voluntary donation to a homeless veterans assistance fund on their annual federal income tax return.

Senator Boxer said, "It is inexcusable that thousands of homeless veterans spend their nights on the streets, and this new check-off box would give Americans a simple way to help those who proudly served our country. With Veterans Day approaching, this bill is a reminder that our men and women in uniform deserve not only our gratitude, but our full and enduring support."

Representative Israel said, "Tonight, more than 100,000 veterans will go to sleep on the streets. These heroes risked their lives and served us honorably. It's time for us to serve and honor them. Today we're giving everyone an easy way to help by introducing legislation that would create a voluntary donation check-off on annual tax forms that would fund homeless veterans assistance."

"By making one small addition to our tax forms we can make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of veterans across the country," Senator Begich said, "In Alaska the Pick. Click. Give. program has proven this is an effective way to better our communities. No veteran should ever have to spend a cold night in the street, they've served our country and defended our freedom and they deserve better."

Senator Merkley said, "Our men and women in uniform have done absolutely everything we asked of them over the last decade – many through repeated and grueling tours of duty. It is unacceptable that so many are coming home to joblessness and homelessness. This small change will help put roofs over veterans' heads and give all Americans a way to express their

profound gratitude for the many sacrifices our servicemembers and their families have made.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that on any given night 107,000 U.S. veterans go to sleep homeless. Over the course of a year, twice that number experience homelessness. Nearly one-fifth of the homeless population are veterans and an estimated 1.5 million veterans are considered at risk for homelessness.

Senator Boxer and Representative Israel’s legislation would give taxpayers the option to check a box on their annual tax return and make a donation of any amount above \$1 to a new Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund. The donations to the fund would be used to provide assistance to homeless veterans through initiatives at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Labor.

*The Check the Box for Homeless Veterans Act of 2011* would support the Administration’s comprehensive five-year plan to end homelessness among our nation’s veterans.